



Disability Access Work Plan



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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DCYF does not discriminate and provides equal access to its programs and services for all persons without regard to race, color, gender, religion, creed, marital status, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, age, sexual orientation or gender identity, veteran or military status, status as a breastfeeding mother, and the presence of any physical, sensory, or mental disability or use of a dog guide or service animal. If you would like free copies of this publication in an alternative format or language, please contact DCYF Constituent Relations at 1-800-723-4831 or email communications@dcyf.wa.gov.

Original Date: June 22, 2026

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Introduction

In 1973, the government created a law called [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#). This law says state programs that get money from the federal government cannot treat people with disabilities unfairly.

In 1990, another law called the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) gave people with disabilities more rights and protections.

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) serves many people, including people with disabilities. Because of this, DCYF must follow both laws. This means DCYF must make sure everyone can use its programs and services.

To help people with disabilities, DCYF may provide:

- Reasonable modifications
- Communication aids and services

A reasonable modification is a change to a rule, policy, or practice that helps a person with a disability use DCYF programs and services.

Communication aids and services help people understand information and communicate. People who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, have low vision, or have speech disabilities may need:

- Sign language interpreters
- Real-time captioning
- Materials in large print
- Audio materials

DCYF has an ADA Accessibility Program. This team makes sure aids and services are accessible.

The team:

- Reviews requests for help or changes
- Provides communication support
- Reviews complaints about disability discrimination
- Trains staff on accessibility

Native Nations Acknowledgement and Collaboration

DCYF recognizes the sovereignty of the 29 federally recognized Native nations in Washington State. DCYF is committed to working government-to-government with Native nations and following the [Indian Child Welfare Act \(ICWA\)](#). This work helps protect indigenous children, families, culture, and communities.

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DCYF works to:

- Include Native culture in services
- Involve Native nations early and often in accessibility and planning
- Use Native inquiry forms when needed
- Include Indigenous voices when reviewing policies and services to support fair outcomes for Native communities

Current and ongoing efforts recognizing a Native voice in ADA compliance

The Office of Tribal Relations works with Native nations to support accessibility by:

- Helping Native people understand their rights
- Making sure documents, forms, publications, and webpages shared with indigenous people are accessible

Purpose

DCYF wants everyone to be able to use the agency's services, programs, and information. The Disability Access Work Plan explains how DCYF will improve accessibility and support people with disabilities.

The Work Plan gives an overview of the steps DCYF is taking—and plans to take—to make sure people with disabilities can use its programs and services fairly and equally. This is the start of a large initiative. Items that are not included in this plan will be listed in the sections for future needs or considerations.

DCYF's vision is that all children and youth in Washington grow up safe, healthy, and thriving in every part of their lives. To support this vision, DCYF works to make sure everyone:

- Can use DCYF's services and programs
- Is treated with respect
- Understands their interactions with DCYF clearly

The Disability Access Work Plan is a "living document. This means it can change over time. DCYF will review and update the plan every three years.

Scope

DCYF's Disability Access Work Plan explains the agency's responsibilities under Title II of the ADA. This part of the ADA requires DCYF to make sure all programs, services, and activities are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities.

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The plan may change as projects are completed and new work begins. This version does *not* include employee disability access (which is part of ADA Title I). Future updates may include employment requirements. The current plan also does *not* focus on the physical accessibility of DCYF buildings.

If someone experiences a physical barrier at a DCYF building or site, they can report the problem to the building or site manager. They can also contact the [ADA Accessibility Program](#) for help.

Definitions

This document mentions the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. These laws protect the rights of people with disabilities. When we talk about “disability access,” we mean the things that must be done under these laws but can also include doing more than what the law requires to make access better.

Accessibility

Accessibility means making sure everyone can understand, use, and take part in the agency’s services, no matter their abilities. DCYF does this by building access into everything from the start, and by finding and removing barriers in programs, buildings, and communications.

Equitable Access

Equitable access ensures everyone has what they need to understand, access, and take part in agency services. Many times, people start from different places, have different abilities and resources, and face different barriers to access services.

DCYF works to make sure everyone can access services fairly by:

- Finding and removing barriers
 - Working with people who have disabilities to learn about their experiences with agency services
 - Responding to each person’s unique needs

Project Prioritization Process

DCYF has a process to decide which accessibility project should happen first. Priority is given to projects with legal requirements (ADA/504) and making services fair for the children, youth, and families.

Each division must send its project ideas to the Disability Access Planning (DAP) Steering Committee. The committee reviews each project and determines whether it should move forward in the process. If a project is declined, the committee writes down the reasons. After a

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project is approved and the level of support is known, the committee helps the division send it to the correct review group:

- Agency-wide projects go to the Project Request Review Board (PRRB).
- Technology projects go through the Business Case Review (BCR) process.

Contact

This Plan was created by the [DCYF ADA Accessibility Program](#) with help from staff. You can contact the ADA Accessibility Program by emailing dcyf.adaaccessibility@dcyf.wa.gov.

Civil Rights Complaint Process

Individuals with disabilities who believe DCYF treated them unfairly because of their disability can file a complaint with the ADA Accessibility Program. Complaints can be made through [DCYF's Civil Rights Complaint form](#) (05-065_399). The form can also be emailed or printed.

Need Help?

Contact DCYF's ADA Program

Voice: 360-480-7230 (relay users dial 7-1-1)

Email dcyf.adaaccessibility@dcyf.wa.gov.

DCYF Projects Impacting Disability Access

Program Access

DCYF will make sure that all services and programs are accessible, even if buildings need changes or if services must be moved. DCYF will also make sure contracted services are provided so people with disabilities receive assistance and support.

Current efforts impacting program access include:

- Disability Access Planning Project: This project is creating a long-term accessibility plan. It includes:
 - Defining "accessibility" and "equitable access"
 - Forming a steering committee to support accessibility work
 - Developing agency-wide efforts and a method for choosing which accessibility projects to do first
 - Creating ways to regularly review and update the plan

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- Voluntary Resolution Agreement (VRA) Implementation Project: This project helps DCYF meet the requirements of a 2025 agreement between DCYF's Child Welfare Programs, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Even though the agreement is with Child Welfare, DCYF will use it to improve accessibility in all agency divisions. This project includes:
 - Updating policies and procedures, including nondiscrimination rules
 - Creating and improving staff training
 - Increasing support for staff to help them provide accessible services
 - Improving Child Welfare case planning
 - Updating DCYF's Notice of Nondiscrimination and Complaint Process
 - Updating contract language and supports for Child Welfare programs
- Improving program access across all DCYF divisions. This work makes sure people with disabilities can fully participate in all DCYF programs. It includes:
 - Providing reasonable free modifications
 - Offering free communication aids to support communication
 - Receiving and reviewing disability-related complaints as required by the ADA and Section 504
 - Providing DCYF's Public Notice of Nondiscrimination, Civil Rights Complaint Process and Form, and other information to the public at no cost
 - Updating and improving staff training on how to work with individuals with disabilities

Future identified projects impacting program access include:

- Self-Evaluation Plan: In three years, DCYF will complete a self-evaluation. This will identify barriers to programs, policies, procedures, and facilities. This self-evaluation will include:
 - Input from staff and the community, including the children, youth, and families that the agency serves.
 - Updating the Disability Access Work Plan to include:
 - Completed projects
 - Active projects with timelines, risks, and barriers
 - Planned future projects
 - Updated contact information and general process

Original Date: June 22, 2026

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Communication and Digital Access

DCYF will make public-facing websites, web apps, and digital content meet the updated federal accessibility rules, [Title II rule on Web Content and Mobile App Accessibility](#), by April 2027. This new rule says everything the public uses must meet the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1 Level AA standards](#). [Washington’s Technology Solutions \(WaTech\)](#) Digital Accessibility Standard [User-01](#) and [User-01-01-S](#) state deadline requires external content to be compliant with WCAG 2.2 AA by July 1, 2026, and requires internal employee technology to be accessible by July 1, 2029.

Current efforts impacting communication and digital access include:

- DCYF Website Redesign and Accessibility Project: This project will make the website meet accessibility standards and make it easier to use. A group of staff from across the agency will be trained to make division documents accessible.
- DCYF Digital Forms ADA Compliance Project: This project ensures that all public-facing DCYF digital forms meet state and federal accessibility standards.
- Agency-wide Communication and Digital Access Efforts: DCYF makes sure internal technology follows the [WA Tech Digital Accessibility Standard \(USER-01-01-S\)](#). The agency will monitor progress and update standards when needed.
 - Divisions, the ADA Accessibility Program, and Communications will continue reviewing public documents and websites for ADA compliance.
 - Webpages and documents will be updated to use plain language and meet accessibility rules.
 - Staff will receive regular reminders about why accessible content matters and how to create it.

Future identified projects impacting communication and digital access include:

- Updating DCYF Intranet (internal) for Accessibility
 - Redesign the intranet to make it more accessible
 - Clearly explain what belongs on the intranet versus SharePoint
 - Make sure SharePoint links are used correctly so staff have a seamless experience – SharePoint pages are part of accessible third-party system standards
- Make Sure Contract Deliverables Include Accessibility Requirements
 - Make sure contracted third-party websites and documents meet accessibility standards

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- Require Voluntary Project Accessibility Templates (VPATs) or similar tools to confirm that purchased technology is accessible
- Accessible Third-Party System Standards
 - Create standard rules for data collection systems used by DCYF
 - Train staff to these standards
 - Monitor staff, keeping to standards and updating as needed
- Data Presentation Standards
 - Create clear accessibility standards on how to present data
- Accessible Internal System Standards
 - Develop accessibility standards for internal systems
 - Train staff to these standards
 - Monitor staff, keeping to standards and updating as needed

Culture, Training, & Practice

DCYF will work to build a culture that understands accessibility and equitable access.

Current efforts impacting culture, training and practice include:

- Improving Agency Culture
 - Recognizing the importance of providing programs and services in a way that is available to everyone, with and without disabilities.
- Strengthening Leadership Awareness
 - Leaders are learning more about ADA requirements, disability access, and how they can support positive changes
- Increasing staff awareness
 - Staff are encouraged to learn about ADA and use the supports DCYF provides.
- Internal Communication Plan
 - Create a plan that gives staff regular updates about accessibility projects
 - Communicate through different methods to reach all staff
- Training Plan Development
 - Create new trainings and update current trainings that teach the rights of people with disabilities

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- How programs can make changes to support people with disabilities
- How to provide communication aids and support
- How staff can make documents accessible
- Agency resources available to staff

Future Needs/Considerations:

- Engaging with the Disability Community
 - DCYF’s Community Engagement team and the ADA Accessibility Program will work to build stronger relationships with people with disabilities.
 - The agency will create plans—and follow through on those plans—to communicate regularly and include the disability community in decision making.

Conclusion

This Disability Access Plan shows DCYF’s commitment to making programs, services, buildings, and communication accessible to everyone. DCYF will continue working with staff, community partners, Native nations, and people with lived experience to remove barriers and improve access.

DCYF knows that accessibility work never stops. The agency will continue improving policies, practices, training, and engagement with the community to follow the law and support fairness and inclusion. By building a culture of accessibility and respect, DCYF will work to create a system where everyone can fully and equally take part in all programs, services, and activities.